

The use of Humour in Presentations

A leadership Presentation on behalf of SofemaOnline (www.sofemaonline.com)

Let's Consider the Role of Humour

Whilst Humour is a “potentially” risky endeavour when included as part of your presentation, if handled correctly it can help carry your performance and enable you to deliver an outstanding performance. Consider that no one enjoys a very “dry” presentation in the way that you can “connect” to speaker and enjoy fully the whole experience of the event.

So humour provides us with an opportunity to connect with the audience – to make them smile and to help them relax.

A Note of Caution

- Humour can be a potential minefield, whenever we laugh at someone else's expensive we make them feel uncomfortable so clearly we need to tread carefully.

Consider the following as a guide to the effective use of Humour During your Presentation

Find your niche! Humour comes across where you are in control of the situation and you are fully engaged with the audience. So where do you see Humour – what makes you laugh – because this becomes the start of the development of your unique style.

Never say anything which can hurt another person's feelings – there are no winners in this and even sympathy for the “victim” can work against you!

Also to be very careful with Humour which is based on sarcasm as it may not travel well and whilst you understand what you mean and what you are trying to say – there is no guarantee that the audience will see it in the same way.

Try to avoid telling direct Jokes, accepting that we are presenting or speaking for a serious reason and the purpose of the humour is to try to lighten the mood, not to have some people rolling about the floor. The best humour is usually generated from direct relevance to the content of the presentation.

Do not try too hard – means we should not “inflict” humour onto our audience rather try to let it flow naturally. When we have the opportunity to laugh at our selves is usually very safe ground as we are not aiming offence which should be felt in the audience.

Humour is the icing on the cake – not the cake so keep it “short and sweet” make people smile not for them to feel you are wasting their time.

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Finally laugh at yourself but not at your own stories or Jokes, when you are laughing at your self you are not connecting with the audience rather you are distancing yourself. Pay attention to your audience and how you are connecting. Be careful however with humour where we make ourselves the target as the audience may take it in a negative way which makes it appear we are inadequate.

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